

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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P 292042Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4291
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL
ALL OTHER CANADIAN POSTS

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 06875

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CA
SUBJECT: TRUDEAU SHARPLY CRITICAL OF LEVESQUE PROPOSAL FOR
RECIPROCAL PROVINCIAL LANGUAGE AGREEMENTS

REF: A. OTTAWA 6874 B. OTTAWA 6788

1. AS REPORTED IN REF A, AT JULY 28 PRESS CONFERENCE PM
TRUDEAU SHARPLY CRITICIZED QUEBEC PREMIER LEVESQUE'S PRO-
POSALS TO OTHER PROVINCES FOR RECIPROCAL EDUCATION LANG-
UAGE GUARANTEES AS NO MORE THAN CYNICAL PLOY BY LEVESQUE
TO EXTRICATE HIMSELF FROM NEGATIVE REACTION TO UNPOPULAR
BILLS 1 AND 101. THESE COMMENTS REPRESENT STRONGEST
DIRECT, PERSONAL ATTACK TRUDEAU HAS MADE ON LEVESQUE TO
DATE. AT SAME TIME, TRUDEAU CAREFULLY DREW LINE BETWEEN
LEVESQUE AND EVEN MORE MILITANT PQ MINISTERS, SUGGESTING
PQ LEADERSHIP OF BAD (LEVESQUE) AND EVEN WORSE (THE MILI-
TANTS). THIS DISTINCTION, IN EMBASSY VIEW, WAS DESIGNED
TO PUBLICIZE APPARENT SCHISM IN PQ CABINET OVER LANGUAGE
LEGISLATION.

2. TO DATE, THIS TYPE OF CONFRONTATIONAL APPROACH HAS
SERVED TRUDEAU WELL IN ELECTORAL TERMS. AS POLLS DEMON-
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STRATE, TRUDEAU AND LIBERAL POPULARITY HAVE SOARED ON
PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF TWO SEASONED WARRIORS, TRUDEAU AND
LEVESQUE, BATTLING TOE-TO-TOE ON NATIONAL UNITY ISSUE.
CANADIAN ELECTORATE OF FEDERALIST LEANING HAS INCREASINGLY
COME TO VIEW TRUDEAU AS ONLY NATIONAL FIGURE CAPABLE OF
DEFENDING NATIONAL UNITY IN THIS TYPE OF CONFRONTATION.
LEVESQUE, FOR HIS PART, HAS BEEN A WORTHY OPPONENT IN

BATTLE OF VERY SHARP WORDS. WHILE CONFRONTATIONAL TACTICS
MAY ADVANCE POLITICAL FORTUNES OF TRUDEAU (AND PROBABLY
LEVESQUE), EMBASSY AND MANY COMMENTATORS DOUBT IT HELPS
CAUSE OF NATIONAL UNITY. ENDERS

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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